Welcome to
Higher degree research (HDR) training –
UQ School of Psychology

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with Alison Pike
Today’s session

• What would you like to know about getting a PhD?
• What IS a PhD?
• Why do a PhD?
• Milestones: why, when, and what
• Thesis examination
  – Publications
  – Oral examination
• FAQs
• Goals by graduation
• Challenges and strategies
• Support and resources:
  – People, Library, space, financial
  – Should problems arise
• Life after your PhD
What would you like to know about getting a PhD?
What IS a PhD?

• Significant original contribution to knowledge in your chosen area
• 3 - 4 years of supervised research training
• A thesis – central argument
  – Analysis of prior work
  – Proposal (educated guess)
  – Method for testing of proposal
  – Interpretation of results
ANOVa: Analysis of Value

Is Your Research Worth Anything?

Developed in 1912 by geneticist R.A. Fisher, the Analysis of Value is a powerful statistical tool designed to test the significance of one's work.

Significance is determined by comparing one's research with the Dull Hypothesis:

\[ H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2 \]

where,

- \( H_0 \) : the Dull Hypothesis
- \( \mu_1 \) : significance of your research
- \( \mu_2 \) : significance of a monkey typing randomly on a typewriter in a forest where no one hears it.

The test involves computation of the F'd ratio:

\[ F'd = \frac{\text{sum(people who care about your research)}}{\text{world population}} \]

This ratio is compared to the F distribution with I-1, N, degrees of freedom to determine a p(in your pants) value. A low p(in your pants) value means you're on to something good (though statistically improbable).

Type I/II Errors

The Analysis of Value must be used carefully to avoid the following two types of errors:

- **Type I**: You incorrectly believe your research is not Dull.
- **Type II**: No conclusions can be made. Good luck graduating.

Of course, this test assumes both Independence and Normality on your part, neither of which is likely true, which means it's not your problem.

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM
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No specific answers to:

- How long does it have to be?
- How many studies?
- What methodology?
Why do a PhD?

• Answer a question/change the world
• Research skills
  – Critical analysis
  – Project management
  – Presentation skills
  – Content knowledge
• Immersion in your passion
• Career outcomes
  – Research
  – Academia
Millstones Milestones

Why?

Milestones play an important role in terms of:

• Your academic development
• Providing some structure to your HDR
• Receiving feedback and guidance
• Resource allocation for the School (including advisory team support and material resources)
• Quality assurance – for UQ, Psychology AND you
**Milestones**

**When?**

- For PhD students, milestones are due at fixed* 12-month intervals (full-time equivalent) from the date of commencement
- MPhil milestones are due at fixed* 6-month intervals from commencement

* Milestone due dates will only change if you have an approved extension, or make changes to your candidature (e.g., taking leave/interruption, going part-time)
Milestones

What?

A 3-stage process – prior to thesis submission, each candidate must attain three milestones:

• confirmation of candidature (12 months) – do you have a viable project?
• Mid-candidature review (24 months) – is your project progressing as expected?
• Thesis review (36 months) – do you have a thesis?

Requirements:

• Written work (confirmation document; manuscript/paper)
• Goals, planning, and review
• Oral presentation (confirmation seminar/ conference)
• Interview
Thesis examination

Thesis by publication?
  • Thesis *including* publications
    (it’s not a transaction!)

Examination process:
  • Selecting and nominating examiners
  • Examiner reports
  • Corrections

Oral examinations

IN CONCLUSION, 
AAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!

THE BEST THESIS DEFENSE IS A GOOD THESIS OFFENSE.
FAQs

• Associate advisors?
• Research other than your PhD?

Any others?
Goals by graduation

- Present competently, to time, at relevant national and international conferences
- Pitch your research to non-experts
  - consider the 3MT
- Publish ??? papers
- Understand the research process: funding, project management, research design & analysis, advanced content knowledge
- Network
- Build/enhance transferrable (communication, teamwork, writing) and professional (e.g., teaching, impact/influence, entrepreneurship) skills
  - Graduate School Career Development Framework
Challenges and strategies

• **Open-ended task**
  – Negotiate goals and timelines between milestones

• **Isolation**
  – Lab groups & research centres, meetings, seminars, conferences

• **Procrastination**
  – Turn up at the desk, talk with others, celebrate successes

• **Feeling overwhelmed**
  – Publish and present as you go, make the thesis task manageable

• **Interest wanes**
  – Read and talk about your topic, why it matters
Support and resources

People: work with your advisors and others

- Talk about expectations
- Establish regular supervision

- Take opportunities to engage with other researchers in your field
- Peer support: PhD buddy system
Support and resources

School Research Centres:
Get involved – many centres and groups run lab groups, seminar series, and/or journal clubs

Library:
https://web.library.uq.edu.au/library-services/services-researchers
for info on data management, publishing, databases and referencing software, training...
Miranda Newell is our librarian – contact her at m.newell@library.uq.edu.au

Space & IT:
Dedicated space and desktop computer for full-time students based in Psychology; part-time students have access to postgrad student labs in the Social Sciences Building
Support and resources

Financial: student research support funds

- up to $1000 per year for the first 3 years of the PhD (full-time)
- for any activity that supports the student’s research or research development
  - equipment/materials/other appropriate project costs
  - data entry assistance, transcription services, etc
  - training (e.g., specialist stats/methods, external courses relevant to project)
  - other activities (e.g., summer schools)
- currently allocated to the Principal Advisor
- funds released in April, to be spent by November of same year (no rollover)
- budget form for planning, milestone documentation
Support and resources

Financial: conference travel

• up to $1000 per year for the first 4 years of the PhD for domestic conferences; can be rolled over to future years if not used

• $2000 international conference supplement can be accessed once confirmation complete – and can be combined with domestic allowance

• you must be presenting at the conference to be eligible for funding
Should problems arise...

“...I’ll hide under some coats, and hope that somehow everything will work out.”

or, preferably...

TALK TO US!

- Speak with your supervisor
- Speak with Alison and/or Cath

- Consider
  - Extension to milestones (for research-related problems)
  - Leave/interruption to candidature
  - Part time enrolment

- Please do not avoid
Life after the PhD

• Academic career (30%)
  – need publications, post doc.
• Research career (10%)
  – University
  – Institute
  – Industry
• Expert/professional career (40%)
  – in topic area...or not (remember those transferrable skills)
• Other